

Good morning, Senators,

Before you rush ahead with wolf legislation, please consider these comments. There are several reasons why I believe a hunt is both ill-advised and unnecessary for the State of Michigan at this time.

This is a process that should be conducted by wildlife officials, not legislators. We should not follow brashly in Wisconsin's footsteps. If you will not question the propriety or morality of the process that led to a hunt in that state, at least consider the fact that you may be inviting litigation through your actions.

Wolf numbers are not so great that they require "management" by humans. The numbers cited assume that our state is an isolated ecosystem, when in fact, wolf populations in the Midwest should be looked at as a whole. Rad Watkins of the Timber Wolf Alliance suggests that 10,000 individuals might be a genetically viable population. We aren't even close to that number.

Nature will not balance itself if we continually interfere. For example, wolves were nearly exterminated in the lower 48 states, making way for a burgeoning coyote population. As a result, coyotes have been trapped, shot from helicopters, poisoned, and gassed in their dens. This is horrific, in and of itself, and now we want to kill the wolves again?

There are numerous, *nonlethal* means of protecting livestock from wolf depredation, that have been proven to be effective. Among them are electric fences, flagging, and the use of donkeys and dogs bred especially for this purpose.

According to a Michigan State University study, 82 % of Michigan residents place value on having wolves in their home state while only 14 % would buy a license to hunt them. What is the majority's opinion regarding introducing a wolf hunt in our state?

Please do not bow to pressure from influential lobbyists, as Wisconsin did, handing the state a bill designed by politicians. And do try your best to create a culture of ethical hunters, if such a term applies to killing animals for sport. Most of all, remember that, if there is a problem, we have created it by encroaching on the wolves, not vice versa. Respect and humility are in order, and a degree of repentance.

I overheard a conversation recently, between two friends. One of the men was saying that chipmunks were getting into his house, and that he had shot one of them. Rather unexpectedly, the second man asked, "Ray, did you cry?" After a moment of silence, Ray admitted that he had not, and went on to describe a story called "Atonement," about a man who drove cross-country, stopping to bury each dead animal that he found on the road.

Please remember these things as you go forward.

Thank you,

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